

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for improving the use of printing devices in a network computer system, comprising:
determining the usage characteristics of at least one printing device;
determining the options available for each of said at least one printing devices;
determining any installed options currently existing on said at least one printing device;
and
determining a way to optimize said at least one printing device from said usage characteristics, said available options and said installed options.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising suggesting at least one change to said at least one printing device for optimizing the use of said at least one printing device with said network computer system.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining the usage characteristics of at least one printing device comprises determining the usage characteristics of all printing devices operating on said network computer system.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining the usage characteristics of at least one printing device comprises monitoring said at least one printing device to determine said usage characteristics.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining the usage characteristics of at least one printing device comprises retrieving said usage characteristics from a database.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining the usage characteristics of at least one printing device comprises determining at least one usage characteristic selected from the group consisting of paper use rate, toner use rate, power use rate, time of print job request, consumable use per job rate, and print job request rate.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining the options available for each of said at least one printing devices comprises retrieving available options from a database.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining the options available for each of said at least one printing devices comprises querying said at least one printing device to retrieve said available options.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining the options available for each of said at least one printing devices comprises querying a web-site for said available options.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining any installed options currently existing on said at least one printing device comprises retrieving installed options from a database.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining any installed options currently existing on said at least one printing device comprises querying said at least one printing device to retrieve said available options.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining a way to optimize said at least one printing device from said usage characteristics, said available options and said installed options comprises using fuzzy logic to determine said way to optimize said at least one printing device.

13. A method for suggesting printing device options in a network computer system, comprising:
operating a device management program on a computer connected to a network communication;
determining the usage characteristics of at least one printing device with said device management program;
operating a computer program on said computer;
using said computer program to determine the options available for said at least one printing device;
using said computer program to determine any installed options on said at least one printing device; and
using said computer program to determine an optimal set of options for said printing device.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein said using said computer program to determine the options available for said at least one printing device comprises:
connecting to the Internet; and
querying a web-site for information about said at least one printing device.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein said computer program is configured to communicate with said device management program.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein said computer program is a component of said device management program.

17. The method of claim 13, wherein using said computer program to determine an optimal set of options for said printing device comprises using said computer program to compare said installed options with said available options.

18. A system for optimizing the use of printing devices on a network computer system, comprising:
a computer connected to said network computer system; and
a computer program for optimizing the use of at least one printing device accessible to said computer.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein said computer program for optimizing the use of at least one printing device is integrated with a device management program.

20. The method of claim 2, wherein said suggesting at least one change to said at least one printing device for optimizing the use of said at least one printing device with said network computer system comprises suggesting an option selected from the group consisting of using a toner miser function, turning on a job retention memory, and suggesting other printing device configurations.

21. The method of claim 1, further comprising suggesting at least one service to incorporate with said at least one printing device for providing enhanced usage of said at least one printing device.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein said suggesting at least one service to incorporate with said at least one printing device comprises suggesting at least one service selected from the group consisting of a maintenance service, a charge per page service, and a printing device monitoring service.